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## JOHN MAC DONNELL CLARAGH.

Among the native Irish poets of the last century, perhaps the most justly celebrated was John Mac Donnell. He was born in the year 1691, in O'Keeffe's Country, near Charleville, in the County of Cork, and was known by the name of "*Claragh*," from the residence of his family, which was situated at the foot of a mountain of that name, between Charleville and Mallow. He died in the year 1754, and was interred in the old church-yard of Ballyslough, near Charleville. Mac Donnell was a man of considerable classical learning, and had made some progress in a translation of Homer into Irish, which was considered of great merit; but his celebrity rested chiefly on his minor works, which were strongly imbued with the political feelings of his Catholic countrymen, who were suffering at that period under the rigours of the penal code. Of these a considerable number have been preserved, and two or three of them have been translated and published in Mr. Hardiman's "*Irish Minstrelsy*." We have endeavoured to find among those remains, one untinged with this prevailing characteristic, to lay before our readers in an English dress, but without success. The following poem, however, though a Jacobite relic, has nothing in it now applicable to existing circumstances, or calculated to excite political feeling; and its poetic beauty is such, we think, as will give pleasure to all our readers, and in addition to its interest as illustrating the Fairy topography of Ireland, entitles it to a place in our little repository of the literature, history, and antiquities of our Country.

## THE DREAM OF MAC DONNELL CLARAGH.

(A JACOBITE RELIC.)

'Twas night, and buried in deep sleep I lay,  
 Strange visions rose before me, and my thoughts  
 Played wildly through the chambers of my brain,  
 When, lo! who sits beside my couch, and smiles  
 With soul-subduing sweetness?—'Tis the Banshee!  
 I saw her taper waist—her raven tresses  
 Waving in wanton ringlets to her feet,  
 Her face, fair as the swan's unsullied plumage.  
 I viewed her—Oh! her mien of angel meekness,  
 Her soul-enchancing eyes, her delicate lips,  
 Her white round breast, her soft and dazzling skin,  
 Her sylph-like form, her pale transparent fingers,  
 Her ivory teeth, her mild and marble brow,  
 Proclaimed her immortality.—The image,  
 Though dream-born, fascinates my fancy still.  
 Thrilling with deepest awe I spoke, and asked  
 From what bright dwelling had the spirit come?  
 She answered not, but swift as thought vanished,  
 And left me to my dark and troubled solitude.  
 Methought I called her, but she heeded not  
 My sighs, my cries, mine anguish—and methought  
 I left my home to seek her. Northwards first  
 My steps I turned, and came to Gruagach's palace,  
 Far distant from my dwelling—forth away  
 I speeded on to Croghan's fairy-hall;  
 Thence to the palace of Senaid, the grand  
 And gorgeous fairy mansion of Ardree,  
 On whose broad summit mighty hosts assemble;  
 I visited that glorious dome that stands  
 By the dark rolling waters of the Boyne,  
 Where Æugus Oge magnificently dwells.  
 In each, in all I entered, sought, enquired,  
 But found her not. In each, in all, they said—  
 "She moves before thee wheresoe'er thou goest."  
 Enough—I reached Mac Lir's colossal pride,  
 Departed thence to Creeveroe, and onward  
 To Temor, and the wondrous fairy structure  
 That stands in power on Knockfirin's airy peak.  
 To Aoibhil's palace-walls at length I came,  
 Which rise below the rock's gigantic brow;  
 And here mine eyes were feasted with the sight  
 Of loveliest damsels dancing to the tones  
 Of soft voluptuous music; and I saw  
 By Aoibhil, Thomond's chieftains, mighty spirits,  
 Beautiful, splendid, cased in armed mail,  
 Whose sports were battle-feats and tilts and tournaments.

And here, too, seated modestly and mildly,  
 Her long dark tresses loosely flowing round her,  
 I saw the heavenlike being whose bright eyes  
 Had made me thus a wanderer. Glancing round,  
 She saw and recognised me. And she spoke:  
 "Mortal," she said, "I pity thy lone wanderings;  
 "Approach and hear my melancholy tale:  
 "The guardian spirit of this land am I.  
 "I weep to see my people fallen—to see  
 "My priests and warlike heroes banished hence  
 "To alien shores, where, languishing and pining,  
 "They groan beneath the iron yoke of slavery!  
 "And ah! my child\*, my son, my lineal heir,  
 "He, too, is far away from me—an exile!  
 "I mourn for him, for them, for all departed.  
 "Pity!—Oh, Heaven! look down upon me!" Here  
 The cloud that sleep had cast around my senses  
 Departed, and along with it departed  
 The towering domes, the palace-halls, and all  
 The chiefs, and dames, and glittering decorations;  
 But o'er my spell-bound soul there hung a gloom,  
 And there even now it hangs, in spite of reason!

\* The Pretender.

## ON TREES AND PLANTING.

That nature has done much for Ireland and man but little, is a general remark; and as regards the appearance of the country is, we regret to say, but too true. Nothing contributes more to the naked and desolate appearance of the remote districts, than the total absence of timber. There we see immense tracts without even a bush to shelter the shivering cattle from the inclemency of the blast, or encourage vegetation by its friendly shelter. If we penetrate into the mountain glens and vallies, we find their steep and rugged sides unproductive as pasture, but fully capable of producing trees, which would not only yield a future profit, but would convert those now desolate and uninviting spots into scenes of most romantic beauty. We naturally enquire to what causes are we to attribute this neglect? We ask why the farmers of the country do not adopt a species of improvement which costs but little, and which would soon repay that cost in the advantages which the shade and shelter of trees would afford both to cattle and to crops, in tempering the summer's heat and the winter's cold; a species of improvement absolutely necessary in a country where the cultivators of the soil do not, in general, possess sufficient capital for the erection of the necessary farm buildings, and whose live stock are consequently obliged to encounter all the rigours of the climate without any protection. Several causes have been assigned for this neglect—some over which the occupying farmer has no control; others which may be traced to the people themselves. Amongst the former, are, the absence of the proprietors of the soil—high rents, and uncertain tenures. It is urged that the tenants of the land have no encouragement to improve their farms in the way we have mentioned—that they are deprived of that fostering patronage, that stimulus to exertion and industry, which the kindness, example, and assistance of resident landlords would afford—that no ties exist between the absentee and his tenant, which can lead the latter to expect that on the expiration of his lease he will meet with any preference on a new letting. If the cold and bleak aspect of this country be contrasted with the cultivated appearance of England, where the fields are divided, warmed, and sheltered by hedge-rows, and every farm-house is surrounded with trees, the answer is, that the English tenants are continued in their holdings from generation to generation, and though the English farming leases are in general shorter than the Irish, that the English proprietor feels a pride in continuing his tenants in their farms, and points out the long continued connexion between his house and its dependents, with as much complacency as he would the antiquity of his own pedigree: that even though there should be no formal lease in existence, the tenants of the ancient proprietors in England, can in most instances address their landlords in the beautiful words of the old song:—

"Ere around the huge oak which o'ershadows my mill,  
 The fond ivy had dared to entwine;  
 Ere the church was a ruin that nods on the hill,  
 Or a rook built a nest in the pine;  
 Could I trace back the time to a far distant date,  
 Since my forefathers toiled in this field;  
 The farm I now hold on your honor's estate,  
 Is the same which my grandfather till'd."

Supposing all those objections to be well founded, we say that the peculiar provisions of the law of Ireland are calculated to meet and remove them. These provisions we shall point out in a future number, and shall show the Irish farmer that in respect to the cultivation of trees he possesses advantages which the English farmer does not; and we shall endeavour to prove to him by calculation that it would be to his benefit to avail himself of them. Having shewn him how he may obtain the property in the trees which he plants, we shall instruct him in the mode of raising them from the seed, and of planting them in the manner most beneficial to himself. Having it in our power to meet the objections we have suggested, we come to others not so easily obviated. We allude to those which exist in the disposition and feelings of the people themselves. One is, that the people of Ireland are destitute of taste, and have no relish for the beauties of nature. This we deny; but we admit that they do not manifest it. In proof that they do possess both taste and feeling, we appeal to any tourist who has penetrated into the unfrequented parts of this Kingdom, whether he did not meet amongst the rudest and most uncultivated of its inhabitants, many persons capable of directing his steps to the spots best worth visiting, and possessing whatever natural beauty the place afforded. If their own acts do not exhibit any of this taste, we say, behold their situation and consider whether it be possible that those whose utmost exertion can scarcely command the humblest necessities of life, can bestow much thought upon what they consider its luxuries. We hope to be able to demonstrate that trees are not mere luxuries, but sources of absolute profit, both in the shelter they afford, and in their own intrinsic value. There are few farms that do not contain spots which, from the formation of the ground, or their own sterility, are completely unproductive, but which would produce trees, and thereby improve the adjoining land. We have often seen the cattle of small farmers, towards the conclusion of the winter, scarcely able to move, or in the provincial phrase, "lifting," a state to which they are reduced more by the inclemency of the season than by the scantiness of provender; and there is no farmer of any experience but must be aware that with an equal supply of food, the beast that is sheltered from cold will thrive, when the animal exposed to its unmitigated effects will be unable to rise when it has lain down. The fences in the southern part of the country, (properly called banks or dykes, but in the language of the country termed ditches, by which name, as best understood, we shall call them,) occupy a great space, and remain absolutely unproductive. These are admirably calculated for the production of trees, and if planted when first made, would not only make the fields which they surround almost equal to cow-houses, but would at the expiration of thirty or forty years be equal in value to the land they enclose. We hope to show that the trees which would be necessary for planting them, could be raised by the farmer at scarcely any expense, and at the expiration of a thirty or forty years' lease, would give him a claim on his landlord for, or would produce by sale as much as would stock a farm equal in extent to that which produced them. Nor are the advantages arising from judicious plantation, confined to those we have mentioned; experience has proved that woods, judiciously placed, have altered the climate of whole districts; many instances could be adduced, where such effects have been produced in Scotland, and elsewhere; and the difference of temperature inside and outside a wood, proves that the breeze passing through one must be considerably softened. Mr. Cobbett says, that in America, where furred gloves and the warmest clothing scarcely enabled him to encounter the severity of the season, the moment he entered a wood he could dispense with any extraordinary covering. Under the influence of such shelter, vegetation is much

earlier than in exposed situations, and the man who possesses sheltered fields has grass for his cattle three weeks earlier than he whose fields are exposed to the sharpness of the blast.

Such arguments we have frequently urged in reply to the objections we have enumerated; but there remains another objection which we could not so easily remove. The farmer says that it will do very well for a gentleman to plant, who can pay a man for protecting his timber; and though he should admit the advantages which would result to himself from the plantation of trees, he says that if he planted, his neighbours would steal his trees in every stage of their growth—that they would be broken, when first planted, for rods to drive their horses, by the passing carriers—that his ash trees would be pulled up root and all, when fit to make the beaters of flails—would be sawed down and carried away at night, when fit to make spade handles, and at a more advanced period, when fit for car shafts—that his elm trees would be barked to cure scalds and burns, and his oak trees to assist in tanning dog skins and horse hides. We admit that such objections exist. We admit that amongst the unenlightened part of our countrymen, the moral restraints which protect other property are not extended to the protection of growing timber. We are aware that a ridiculous idea prevails, that trees are no more the object of private appropriation than the air that surrounds us; we know that the exhortations of the clergy and the punishment of the law are alike unavailing in preventing such depredations, and that the man who would spurn with contempt the idea of stealing any other article of property, would not hesitate to steal a tree, valuable perhaps in itself, and rendered doubly, trebly valuable to its owner, by its situation. In removing such ridiculous prejudices, we implore the assistance of the clergy, and of every other man interested in the improvement of the country. We shall furnish the people with instructions which will enable every man who possesses a cabbage garden, to furnish himself with a supply of timber suited to his necessities, and we would at the same time suggest to our agricultural population, that the price of every article is diminished in proportion to the extent of the supply, and that by encouraging plantation and the raising of timber, the prices of their carts, ploughs, and every other article composed, or partly composed of timber, will be proportionably diminished. To those who do not require such articles, we would suggest that were timber abundant, they would be enabled to erect comfortable cottages for a sum not exceeding what it would now cost to erect a pig-stye. But it may be said that if timber were so cheap, it would not repay the expense of raising it. The answer is, that it would be valuable in many ways besides the money which it may be worth; and we do not advise the working farmer to devote any land to it but that which would otherwise be unproductive. It is our intention in future numbers, to give plain instructions for the raising and planting of timber and fruit trees; together with a familiar sketch of the law, both civil and criminal, relating to the subject. If we think it would be useful to the public, we may hereafter embody all in a cheap and separate publication.

J. E. H.

#### PICTURE GALLERY OF THE ROYAL IRISH INSTITUTION, DUBLIN.

"The Royal Irish Institution, for the encouragement and promotion of the Fine Arts in Ireland," was founded on the 4th of June, 1813, and their Gallery for the public exhibition of the works of the Old Masters, was first opened in the year 1829. It is an unpretending, but pleasing architectural structure, creditable to the taste of its designer, Mr. Frederick Darley, and consists of two stories—the lower, ornamented with rusticated masonry, pierced by two circular headed windows and an entrance archway—the upper, decorated with four plain pilasters, upholding a continued entablature: the spaces intermediate between the pilasters, are occupied by niches, decorated by architraves and dressings. The interior consists of an entrance hall, board-room, and keepers' apart-